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Oxford University Statistics. By JAMES HEYWOOD, Esq., F.R.S.

[Read before the Statistical Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 11th September, 1846.]

A REMARKABLE proof of the interest felt by eminent statesmen in the ancient universities was afforded, some months ago, in the preparation of a memorial to the Vice-Chancellor and Heads of Houses in Oxford for university extension. This memorial obtained the signatures of Lords Sandon, Ashley, Robert Grosvenor, Westminster, Carnarvon, Lincoln, Canning, and Mahon, Sir Thomas Acland, Bart., M.P., the Hon. and Very Rev. Dr. Herbert, Dean of Manchester, Hon. and Rev. Horace Powys, Hon. Sidney Herbert, M.P., and the present Bishop of Oxford, (at that time the Very Rev. Dr. Wilberforce, Dean of Westminster): it was also signed by the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., Right Hon. Henry Labouchere, M.P., and Messrs. T. D. Acland, M.P., Philip Pusey, M.P., W. B. Baring, and J. Wilson Patten, M.P.

Among such distinguished names in public life, many had also obtained the highest academical honours in Oxford itself. Thus, Lord Sandon took a double first class degree in 1819; Mr. Labouchere was in the first class in 1820; Lord Ashley obtained a similar honour in 1822; four years afterwards Dr. Wilberforce was in the second class in classics, and the first class in mathematics. In 1831 Mr. T. D. Acland took a double first class degree, and in the following year the same honourable reward of intellectual exertion was obtained by Mr. William Ewart Gladstone.

The principal object of the memorialists appears to have been the "rendering academical education accessible to the sons of parents whose incomes were too narrow for the scale of expenditure at present prevailing among the junior members of the University of Oxford," but these eminent men also deemed it right to express their opinion generally on the subject of the ancient universities in the following emphatic terms:—

“Our universities take up education where our schools leave it, yet no one can say that they have been strengthened or extended, whether for clergy or laity, in proportion to the growing population of the country, its increasing empire, or deepening responsibilities.”

The result of this memorial was a Report from a Committee appointed among the resident graduates of the University, which was published in March, 1846, and contained the extraordinary intelligence, that the number of annual matriculations at Oxford has, on the whole, decreased of late years; and this too, notwithstanding the manifest increase of wealth and population in the country.

During the ten years from 1819 to 1829, the number of matriculations at Oxford averaged 415 per annum, and in one year, 1824, the number rose to 444. From 1829 to 1839, the matriculations only averaged 385 per annum, and in the seven years following, 1839 to 1845, their number was 407 per annum, being an average decrease of 8 per annum from the previous period of 1819 to 1829.

Several of the larger colleges at Oxford, as, for instance, Christ Church and Oriel, are always crowded with students, but many of the smaller colleges have not obtained by any means an equal share of public favour, and the students are not usually anxious to enter themselves in these minor institutions; consequently, there is still accommodation in some of the colleges for additional students.

The undergraduates of Oxford are generally intended in after life, either for the church, the bar, or the senate, or they belong by birth to the class of landed proprietors or wealthy merchants, and may subsequently find themselves at the head of great practical interests in their own localities, as possessors of large estates, extensive mines, long lines of canals, or a preponderating influence in particular railroads in their own neighbourhood.

Schoolmasters for grammar-schools also very frequently receive their education at Oxford; and as the colleges of the University are supplied with a large proportion of their pupils from the great public schools, much of the classical instruction usual in those seminaries occupies the chief share of attention at the University.

Progression is thus rendered extremely difficult in the Oxford educational system. A young boy is instructed at a public school in Latin and Greek composition; he reads Greek plays, and becomes familiar with Thucydides. At Oxford he finds all these school subjects admitted as essential requisites for academical honours. Aristotle he has to read in addition, and thus fortified, with a little more classical study, and some acquaintance with logic and divinity, he takes a respectable degree, obtains a fellowship at his college, and is transferred again, as a master, to some public school, to carry on the same round of instruction among the youth of the next generation.

Mathematics are very little read at Oxford. “To follow scientific study,” observes Professor Powell, “is purely optional; and the average of those who evince any degree of acquaintance with it is about 1 in 11 or 12.”

A voluntary mathematical examination takes place at Oxford twice in every year after the degree examination, and the numbers of mathematical classmen may be estimated as follows:—

Voluntary Mathematical Honours.

		1st Class.	2nd Class.	3rd Class.	4th Class.	Total.
1840.	Easter	1	1	2	4	} 21
	Michaelmas....	3	4	2	4	
1841.	Easter	6	2	1	7	} 27
	Michaelmas....	0	1	5	5	
1842.	Easter	6	2	2	4	} 27
	Michaelmas....	2	1	3	7	
1843.	Easter	4	2	1	4	} 22
	Michaelmas....	2	4	2	3	
1844.	Easter	1	1	1	8	} 26
	Michaelmas....	1	8	0	6	
1845.	Easter	5	3	4	7	} 36
	Michaelmas....	3	4	2	8	

Average for the six years, 26 per annum.

Various reasons may be assigned for this comparative indifference of the main body of Oxford undergraduates to voluntary mathematical examinations, but the principal one is probably to be found in the circumstance that such examinations are voluntary.

Formerly the public schools were said to be in fault; public school-boys did not learn mathematics, and so came up to college ignorant of the merest rudiments of algebra and Euclid, and but little inclined to commence their study. Rugby, however, under the late Dr. Arnold, and Eton, so far as the influence of the head master, Dr. Hawtrey, can assist, have adopted an improved system; but the generality of young men at college are not likely to read mathematics, unless they find scientific attainments valued in the University, and more especially deemed of some importance in the disposal of fellowships.

These numerous and tempting rewards of intellectual exertion must ever guide the severest studies of any university so richly endowed with them as Oxford; and it is of the greatest importance for the advancement of knowledge in this country, that the degree examination itself, which forms as it were the stepping-stone to the fellowship, should from time to time be modified, so that it may become as useful and beneficial as possible.

At present a knowledge of mathematics is not positively required for graduation at Oxford. Euclid may be and generally is exchanged for logic, and in the subsequent voluntary mathematical examination a fourth class may be obtained by a perfect knowledge of only four books of Euclid, and the first or elementary part of algebra.

Third-class men are expected to be familiar with the six books of Euclid, with algebra, plain and spherical trigonometry, and conic sections.

A second class requires in addition the differential and integral calculus, and some acquaintance with mechanics.

Astronomical questions and higher mechanical queries are given to the candidates for the first class, in addition to the more rudimentary branches already noticed; and altogether the knowledge required for a first class in mathematics at Oxford is about the same as that for the second class, or the Senior Optimes, at Cambridge.

The most serious examinations at Oxford are those for degrees, which are preceded by a minor examination, termed the Little-go, or responsions, given at the end of about a year and a half of academical residence.

College lectures are given every term to the undergraduates, in order to prepare them for the University examinations; and it is generally found most convenient to divide the pupils into two sets for the lectures, one including the more advanced students, who may afterwards compete for high academical honours, and the other comprising the less advanced, who may be content with passing the ordinary degree examination.

The books in which common degree men are usually lectured by their college tutors are the second half of Herodotus, the four Porson plays of Euripides, the second decade of Livy, and Horace or Juvenal. Lectures on Sophocles and Thucydides are attended both by class candidates and common degree men, but those on the higher classics, as Æschylus, Tacitus, &c., are intended especially for the class men. Courses of elementary and more advanced lectures are also given on logic, divinity, and Latin composition. Each lecture occupies an hour, and three lectures on each subject are given in the week, on alternate days. An undergraduate frequently attends three courses in a term, and may thus be in the lecture-room one or two hours in the day, and if regular in his attendance, nine hours in the week*.

Lectures are usually insisted upon more strictly for the common degree candidates, as they have not the same emulation to prompt them to exertion, and, besides, they require more superintendence, probably, in many cases, on account of their greater wealth, and of the amusements of hunting, shooting, billiards, &c., to which they frequently accustom themselves. It is usual for a college tutor at Oxford to appoint a portion of Latin composition to be written out by all the undergraduates under his own care once in every week, which is publicly brought up to him for inspection. Generally this exercise is a translation of English into Latin, but it is often varied by the tutors, and a Latin theme or essay substituted, the subject of which is left to be selected by the student.

At the end of every term is a sort of repetition examination in different studies, which is termed "collections." The undergraduates are requested to bring in for examination any book or books they may have been reading during term, whether lectures have been given on them or not; on this occasion the majority of students generally prefer the lecture subjects, with which they are most familiar. Exercises are also given in Latin composition, and some questions are asked on the ancient histories of Greece and Rome.

Responsions, or as they are colloquially termed, the "Little-go," occur about the spring or summer of the second year of residence in Oxford. In this first and comparatively easy university examination one Greek and one Latin book are taken up by each student, such, for instance, as the second half of Herodotus, or four plays of Sophocles or Euripides; and for more advanced students, four plays of Æschylus or Aristophanes, or the half of Thucydides. In Latin either Livy,

* For these details, as well as for valuable information contained in the subsequent part of this paper, I am much indebted to the kindness of an Oxford friend.

Horace, or Juvenal is frequently selected, and the class candidates sometimes take up Tacitus. Six books of Livy are deemed sufficient, or the Odes and *Ars Poetica* of Horace; and similarly six books of Tacitus's *Annals* will suffice.

The Little-go examination in classics is confined solely to construing and grammar; questions being asked which arise out of the passages given, and relate to verbal inflections, or the construction of the sentence: these questions are not of greater difficulty than those in an ordinary respectable grammar school. To class candidates, some few questions of wider scope, such as the dates of different Grecian dialects, are occasionally given, but mere correctness of rendering and of parsing is amply sufficient for success.

Latin composition, consisting of the translation of an easy passage of English, such as a piece out of the *Spectator*, is required at responsions. The absence of grammatical mistakes in this exercise, as in the foregoing, will always ensure a pass. Among the unsuccessful candidates, a large proportion fail in this department, having in many cases not been already accustomed to the classical drilling of a public school.

The three first parts of Aldrich's *Logic* form the remaining subject of the Oxford Little-go, for which students may if they wish it, substitute the three first books of Euclid's *Elements* of Geometry, but this is rarely done. Mathematics do not appear to be in very high estimation among the students of the university, and logic is absolutely required for class honours in the subsequent degree examination.

From six to a dozen or more questions on paper are given in logic, referring to different parts of Aldrich, and the student is expected to answer them in writing. If any of these are omitted, or are scantily answered, they are put again afterwards, *vivâ voce*, in an easier form, thus giving the candidate a fresh opportunity to prove his acquaintance with the subject. A good deal of preparation is necessary to ensure a pass in logic, and the majority of the failures at the Little-go, occur either in this department, or in that previously noticed of the Latin composition.

When the three first books of Euclid are taken up, in place of logic, the examination is often commenced in the second book; figures are supplied to the candidate, but if even with this assistance, he should be unable to demonstrate the propositions required, he is then questioned in the first or third book, as easier subjects. Some very superior scholars have failed in this department, not having probably received any mathematical instruction at the public school in which they had been previously educated.

About eight candidates are examined every day during the Little-go, and a day seldom passes without one at least being plucked out of this number: there are, however, rarely more than three unsuccessful in one day, although this varies according to the disposition of the examiners and the attainments of the students. There are three Little-go examinations during the year, in the Michaelmas, Lent, and Act (or June) terms. The average number of candidates varies from 130 to 210 on each occasion, and the examinations consequently last about three weeks or a month.

Students who have failed twice in the Little-go, usually remove from their college into a hall or institution without fellowships; at

Balliol, one failure is sufficient to disqualify a young man from remaining in college, while at Brazenose College, three failures are allowed before removal is insisted upon.

The name of polite literature, or "*literæ humaniores*," is given to the various classical and logical studies of the university of Oxford, though these subjects hardly include the essential parts of polite education, requisite at the present day to qualify a gentleman either for society, or for the business of public life.

At the ordinary degree examination, which occurs about a year and a half after the Little-go, Aldrich's Logic, including some acquaintance with Whately's valuable work, is usually a leading subject. On this occasion, queries are proposed in the different heads of dialectical science, and the student is requested to examine, discuss or correct syllogisms, arguments, and fallacies.

Four books of Euclid may be substituted for the Logic, but this is not often done. Latin composition, required for the ordinary degree, consists in the translation of a somewhat longer and more difficult portion of English into Latin, than that already noticed as a part of the Little-go. Unusual or modern words may also be found in this exercise, and when the student cannot express them suitably in Latin, he has no alternative but to leave blanks in his translation.

Extracts from the classical authors, which the students take up for examination, are set by the examiners, and the chief translations are made from them in writing.

Two Greek and one Latin book are required for the ordinary degree. Half of either of the Greek historians will suffice for the historical work in that language, or Xenophon's Hellenics or his Memorabilia. Twelve books of Homer may also be taken up. Four Greek tragedies usually form the second classical work for the ordinary degree examination. In Latin, on this occasion, the second decade of Livy is very commonly taken up, or Horace, or Juvenal, or sometimes the Æneid of Virgil, or his Eclogues and Georgics. Portions of Aristotle are professed by some of the more ambitious students.

Oral examination in ancient history forms a part of the common degree examination; the questions referring principally to important facts narrated by the respective Greek and Latin authors, testing at the same time the knowledge of the candidate in the political systems and revolutions of states, with which his classical reading may have rendered him familiar. The histories of Livy are frequently under consideration in this department, when that book is taken up by the student which is often the case. A little *vivâ voce* construing is also considered to be complimentary on the same day with the written exercises, but it is not usual for the examiners to ask for this, unless from students whose readiness and talent have been already exhibited in previous parts of the trial.

Many students read up "history," from translations, abridgements, or analyses of classical works, thus in some measure lessening the labour which they would otherwise find in the perusal of the original authors.

In the higher or class examination for the B.A. degree, "polite literature" at Oxford is still based upon Aristotle, and the examiners are considered to pride themselves in their selection from his ethical

and rhetorical writings of whatever is abstruse and complicated and difficult, to the neglect of the philosophical views of that great writer on more interesting topics, as on human character, or friendship, or national polity.

The student, who wishes to excel in the Aristotelian examination, must have made himself acquainted with the various explanations of obscure or contested passages in the *Nicomachean Ethics*; he must have endeavoured to master the confused arrangement of the most difficult parts of this once celebrated treatise, and have investigated the different methods of division in different editions, arising from the complication of its various subjects.

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is a work far more easy of comprehension, from its clearer and more accurate system of arrangement, and a knowledge of both the *Ethics* and *Rhetoric* are deemed requisite for obtaining a place either in the first or second class at Oxford.

A large amount of laborious study is essential for complete preparation in the logical department of the class examination. Questions on the leading points of this abstruse art are given, and the undergraduate is expected to prove his familiarity with the syllogistic system, as well as with logical arguments and fallacies. Aldrich's *Logic* must be thoroughly known, and an acquaintance with the theory of syllogisms must be sought in the writings of its originator, Aristotle, particularly in his "*Organon*." An extended course of reading on logic will inevitably demonstrate to the student, that great authorities are frequently at variance on various points, and he will have to acquire the habit of discriminating for himself between conflicting opinions, which in the written examination he is occasionally invited to do.

One dialogue of Plato, such as the *Gorgias*, or the *Phædo*, may be taken up as a book at the class examination. The philosophical writings of Cicero are seldom discussed, and it would be regarded as eccentric for the student to profess even the *Tusculan Questions*; indeed, the Ciceronian style of philosophy meets with little encouragement in the Oxford schools.

Far more popular with the university authorities, is the *Analogy* of Bishop Butler, a clear understanding of which is highly appreciated by the examiners: with this work the three first of the collection of sermons by the same learned prelate are usually taken up. The mastering of such books is of great importance for the decision of class qualifications, and affords no slight proof of intellectual power.

A complete course of metaphysical reading at Oxford also includes the writings of Locke, Berkeley, and Montesquieu, of Reid and Dugald Stewart, as well as the German works of Kant and Fichte. Paley is much underrated on the banks of the Isis, and generally speaking, the attention of the student of moral science is chiefly directed to ancient philosophy. Ritter and Tenneman's works are useful on the ancient philosophic systems, and Lucretius "*de Rerum Natura*" will be found of value, with reference to the examination.

Moral philosophy is styled "science" in colloquial phraseology at Oxford, and each separate treatise in the philosophical department is farther honoured by the appellation of "a science."

Thus, for instance, a student who has read the *Ethics* and *Rhetoric* of Aristotle, a dialogue of Plato, and Butler's *Analogy*, (a common

combination,) is said to have got up four "sciences." With the addition of Aldrich's *Logic*, he is supposed by this singular mode of expression to have read five "sciences."

Next to Aristotle, the history of Thucydides may be considered of especial importance in the Oxford course of reading. For a good class, it is desirable to bring up the whole work, in which a competent knowledge of the more difficult passages can only be acquired by frequently recurring to them. In the department of history, the other works to be studied are Herodotus, and either Livy or Tacitus. Style is of more consequence in the historians, with reference to the examination, than either authority or veracity, and hence Livy is preferred to Polybius, and Herodotus is constantly read, notwithstanding his leaning to romance and exaggeration. Only a limited range of historical reading is required from the student, who has to make himself acquainted with the details of the Persian and Peloponnesian wars, the early and often mythical annals of the Roman state, and the history of the first emperors of Rome, while few take the trouble to study the rise of Macedonian power, or the age of Cicero and Cæsar. In Oxford, as in all other universities, the limits of the examination circumscribe the reading of many of the students, and the modification and improvement of this central regulating power, the degree examination, would diffuse fresh vigour and energy throughout the whole educational system. Within the narrow bounds prescribed, deep reading and serious study are, however, requisite for the attainment of high honours. questions are occasionally set, which turn on comprehensive views of national polity and tendencies, or on parallels of similar ancient events at different periods, or on other topics of a like kind, yet requiring the exercise of a thoughtful mind a retentive memory and a practised faculty of discrimination, to be properly discussed.

When Herodotus is taken up for a class, the whole of the nine books are expected, though the questions in the schools usually relate chiefly to the first four. Xenophon is much less studied at Oxford than the two great historians, only when Thucydides is taken up, the *Hellenics* are often professed at the same time, as they complete the narrative of the Peloponnesian war, and carry down Grecian history to the period of the death of Xenophon, B.C. 360.

Demosthenes and the other great historical orators of ancient Greece are very rarely studied at Oxford.

Livy requires to be read with the critical observations of Niebuhr on Roman history, and the first ten books of Livy seem to be preferred for a class. Portions of Tacitus are often taken up, and are considered as a "high book." The *Epistles* of Cicero, which throw much light on cotemporary history, and are unexceptionable in style, are, nevertheless, not usually encouraged as "class" books.

"Scholarship," in Oxford parlance, means an acquaintance with the Greek tragedies and poetry, and with philosophy, and verse and prose composition. *Æschylus* is a decided favourite with the class examiners, and *Sophocles* is seldom omitted from the list of an ambitious candidate; *Euripides* is not quite so popular, being often taken up at the common degree examination. *Aristophanes* enjoys a high reputation, and either *Homer's Iliad* or *Odyssey* may be taken up by all classes of scholars: *Pindar* is only professed by the more advanced.

Latin poetry for the schools includes Horace, Terence, and Juvenal, all of them being popular works at Oxford. Virgil should not be omitted in a good class-list. Lucretius is regarded as more difficult, and is not so usually taken up.

Translations from English into Latin are required from all university students at Oxford; but original Latin composition is not expected at the ordinary degree examination, although frequently set as a college exercise, and occurring in the generality of examinations for orders. When the student is intended for the ministry some practice in it may be useful. Both varieties of writing Latin, whether from a portion of English or in the form of a theme, tell considerably in the class examination; and a correct style in translating from English into Greek is also of immense importance, together with a knowledge of Greek accentuation. In these particulars, as well as in Greek and Latin verses, the public schoolmen excel, and to them, in consequence, the best Oxford rewards are often assigned.

At the commencement of the *vivâ voce* examination for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Oxford, the students are examined in "Divinity," and a certain amount of theological knowledge is absolutely necessary for success, whether the candidates are trying for the honours of a class or are contented with an ordinary degree; no difference in the amount of "Divinity" is observed in either case, and no allowance is made for pre-eminent success in the classical or philosophical parts of the examination.

Every student begins the divinity examination by receiving from the examiners a portion of one of the four Gospels to construe: questions are then put to him concerning the events which preceded and followed the incident declared in the text. This may lead to some doctrinal passage, which bears on one of the Thirty-nine Articles, and the candidate is required to repeat that Article by heart, and to confirm it by the quotation of other texts. Hence an occasion is taken to digress to some period of the Old Testament history, through different parts of which the examination ranges: some acquaintance with the Levitical Law is here requisite, and generally, the points of connexion between the Old and New Testaments, such as the types exemplified and the prophecies fulfilled in the latter, are much dwelt upon. The history contained in the Acts of the Apostles must also be accurately known.

Generally speaking, the amount of "Divinity" required for a B. A. degree at Oxford includes an acquaintance with the histories both of the Old and New Testaments, and an ability on the part of the candidate to construe the Greek text of the four Gospels, to repeat by rote each of the Thirty-nine Articles, and to quote the texts usually cited in proof of them. It is incumbent on the examiners, according to the ancient rules of the University, to be more particular in the theological department of the examinations than in any other, and hence the majority of failures at the degree examination occur from want of success in this department.

So completely, indeed, are the minds of some of the students bewildered by the novelty and publicity of the scene, that questions more suited to the precincts of a common Sunday school than to the final examination of a university are continually misunderstood or unanswered; and a term seldom passes over without the occurrence of

mistakes on the part of the candidates, which would be deemed ludicrous on any less important or less serious subjects. A *visd voce* examination is, at any time, less favourable to the clear comprehension of difficult topics than one conducted with printed papers of questions; and when a young student rises, for the first time, in the presence of three or four examiners, with a number of his cotemporaries seated near to listen to whatever replies he may make to the queries put to him, a good deal of nervousness is almost inevitable.

Besides, in the case of candidates for a class, many of the students take up such a vast quantity of ancient literature for examination, that they may easily find themselves pressed for time in their preparation of the classical subjects, and they are too apt, amidst their other multifarious occupations, to neglect their theological reading, and especially the historical part of it. The class candidates also generally underrate the degree of proficiency required in divinity. Hence whatever failures may occur in the class-schools, are almost always owing to this cause; scholars are then occasionally plucked who have been reading up the other subjects with great care and accuracy, but have overlooked this indispensable qualification. On the other hand, cases of distinguished talent in the study of divinity now and then occur, and questions are accordingly proposed by the examiners calculated to elicit the knowledge so possessed. The quantity of information required for success in the theological department is however always and under all circumstances fixed and invariable, and it is merely as a compliment to superior scholars that queries of extraordinary difficulty are occasionally set to them.

A more satisfactory plan would probably be to conduct the divinity examination by means of printed papers of questions, adapted in part to the less accustomed students, with a few queries of considerable difficulty for the more advanced, but limiting the subjects of examination as far as possible to a definite range of Scripture history and antiquities.

Experience proves that the students who are plucked in divinity are generally deficient in the department of interpretation of texts and articles, and in that of history. Not only are all candidates for the B.A. degree expected to perform the wearisome and laborious task of committing to memory the whole of the Thirty-nine Articles with their antiquated and formal diction and their accumulated clauses, but they have farther to get up a large amount of illustrative biblical knowledge, and to produce it when called upon to do so at a moment's warning, in the University schools.

The certain result is, and must continue to be, until the system of examination is altered, that a large number of the candidates for degrees are plucked in this subject of divinity.

It is also found, that students who have come forward to enter themselves for their degree are occasionally so apprehensive of the result of their examination, that they retire from the contest even before its commencement; and as they do not pass, they are reckoned as if among the unsuccessful candidates.

Some criterion of the peculiar working of the Oxford system, in its present state, may be obtained from the following extraordinary pro-

portion of unsuccessful candidates, who are either plucked, or who retire of their own accord from the University examinations:

Results of the Oxford Degree Examination.

	Total number of candidates.	Class Men.	Ordinary Degrees.	Total number passed.	Total did not pass.
1840	424	97	210	307	117
1841	399	105	154	259	140
1842	426	102	188	290	136
1843	409	98	200	298	111
1844	409	79	198	277	132
1845	398	84	194	278	120
	<hr/> 2,465	<hr/> 565	<hr/> 1,144	<hr/> 1,709	<hr/> 756
Annual average	410	94	190	284	126

Hence nearly one-third of the candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Arts are annually unsuccessful, and this too when the majority of the aspirants have kept terms in the University for fifteen terms, or nearly three years and a half, (there being four terms in the academical year in Oxford.)

Students who fail twice in the B.A. examination remove to a Hall, or institution without fellowships, and instances have occurred of extraordinary dulness, when candidates have reached their seventh or eighth year of residence, before they have succeeded in passing the ordinary degree examination.

It is obvious that a considerable number of second trials must be included in the number of candidates for the B.A. degree, as the average of the annual matriculations from 1839 to 1845 is only 407, and the annual average of undergraduates of at least three years' standing, desirous to pass their degree examination from 1840 to 1845, is the large number of 410, when it is well known that in all universities the number of resident students annually diminishes, and that after the lapse of three years many of the undergraduates, to whom a degree is comparatively of no consequence, will have left the University.

With the large proportion of nearly one-third of the candidates annually unsuccessful some revision of the examination system for the degree of Bachelor of Arts appears desirable; and if any means of improvement could be devised to render the subjects of examination more really useful or even less mortifying to the students, a much larger number of degrees would probably be taken every year in the University of Oxford.